

**CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2011**

**HOPE HIGHLANDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**300 HOPE ROAD**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: 5:00 P.M.**

**PUBLIC SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION  
MINUTES**

**A special School Committee meeting was held on the above date at the Hope Highlands Elementary School with the following members present: Chairperson Iannazzi, Mr. Traficante, Mrs. Ruggieri, Mr. Lombardi, Mrs. Culhane and Mrs. McFarland. Mr. Bloom was absent with cause. Also present were Superintendent Nero, Mr. Balducci, Mrs. Coogan, Mr. Dillon, Mrs. Nota-Masse, Mr. Votto and Attorney Cascione.**

**The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. It was moved by Mrs. Culhane, seconded by Mr. Lombardi and unanimously carried that the members convene to Executive Session Pursuant to RI State Laws PL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel; PL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation (Contract Negotiations' Update – Bus Drivers / Trades People/Mechanics, Custodians); (Teacher Negotiations; Teacher Assistants/Technical Assistants/Bus Aides Negotiations), (Secretary Negotiations); (Consideration of litigation options and legal options regarding status of aid to education appropriation and legal advice**

relating to the same).

### **Call to Order – Public Session**

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was conducted and the roll was called. A quorum was present.

Ms. Iannazzi reported that no votes were taken during Executive Session.

### **Executive Session Minutes Sealed – June 28, 2011**

Moved by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mrs. Culhane and unanimously carried to seal the minutes of Executive Session from June 28, 2011.

### **School Committee Member Communications**

**Mr. Lombardi:**

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to apologize in advance for my redundancy but it continues and continues and last week I would have had one communication and tonight I would have had a second communication but the problem was that last week there was nobody here. I could not communicate with anybody.

I am insulted and I am offended again by the Mayor's use of my name in a tax bill that was sent to the City tax payers. I must say that I am

insulted and I am offended for several reasons, the first being that I do not get a tax bill on my home because I escrow my taxes on my home. When I first learned of the letter naming myself and Chairperson Iannazzi as one of the reasons for the tax increase along with the City Council and the pension system, you can imagine my surprise. I received six phone calls the next morning from friends who thought it was funny. I did not think it was funny at all and whether you agree or disagree with the Mayor about the reasoning for the tax increases in the City of Cranston, isn't the issue. If you want to hold the School Committee accountable for that, that's your opinion and this is America; however, I am particularly upset about the use of the mails on City time with City dollars naming names. I think that there were actual inconsistencies typed in the letter. The Mayor continues to insist that he has given us \$5.1 million in two years and I keep reminding him and continue to remind him that he was ordered to pay \$1.8 million of that money. He seems to not mention the fact that his own auditors told him that we're \$4 million under the BEP and more importantly he said he told Ms. Iannazzi and myself to stop spending outside our needs. I can look all of you in the eye tonight and I can sleep tonight and say with complete confidence that he never told me anything because he's never met with me on that issue. The time that we had the opportunity to meet was when we talked about the now famous Global Settlement discussions and he chose not to be there. He chose to send his lawyer. There are three groups he states as being responsible: Pension, School Committee and Council; the Mayor's office isn't

responsible for the tax increase at all. That's what I got from the letter. This comes on the heels of an Op. Ed. piece where he apologized. It comes at the heels where I thought was inappropriate in his conduct to my colleagues on the School Committee and he apologized for that. Then he used the word "extortion" when he talked about the Global Settlement, which is a crime and I don't think any of us here have committed any crimes. I conclude with the fact that there's one of two motives: It's either political and somehow Ms. Iannazzi or I or both represent some sort of a threat to the Mayor. I said it once; I'll say it again; I'm not running against the Mayor. If it is a political reason for that letter, then shame on him because you don't use City dollars and City time and City letterhead to make political statements. The other reason that I can think of is vindictiveness that I am against the Mayoral Academy. Again, equally, if that's the reason, I am once again insulted by that. I say again and again that I am not running for Mayor; I have nothing personal with the Mayor; I respect the Mayor's office. I think I've been cordial to the Mayor. It's become personal and I ask rhetorically, I don't know what I did or when I did it but I would be more than happy to sit with the Mayor; talk with the Mayor and ask him what his problem is with me because I just don't know. I don't speak for Ms. Iannazzi but I just don't know.

The second issue, which is my pet peeve tonight, is this \$15,000 issue in paper today. Again, I say simply, "get it done; get the money to where it belongs and how it belongs there and do it and forget

**about.....if we're worried about increasing our Maintenance of Effort by \$15,000 we're really missing the point here". If the kids can have Music for \$15,000 let's get it to them. This innovative Mayor that people like to call pro-education Mayor, respectfully, I think he's pro-Mayoral Academy Mayor. Thank you.**

**Ms. Iannazzi**

**Just to echo Mr. Lombardi, Mayor Fung was recently recognized by RICAM as a super hero. In Cranston, our 1,500 middle school students know that not to be true because Mayor Fung has turned his back on the 1,500 students in our middle schools that deserve an extra curricular music program. Once again, I would join Mr. Lombardi in echoing his statements and ask that the Mayor not stand in the way of the firefighter's concession of \$15,000 to plug a middle school music program.**

**Mrs. Culhane**

**I've been silent on this; those of you who know I blog and I'm on facebook. I feel that tonight I need to make a couple of comments. I tried to be a cheerleader for the Mayor from when he was first in, supporting a lot of his innovations when he was talking about economic development and all things he wanted to do to continue to make this City great. I bought into that and I supported it and then even when he started moving into the Mayoral Academy, as much as**

I'm against it, I tried to have an open mind to his ideas; I have met with him; I discussed options and things with him. However, I can't help but feel that every time I have given an opportunity to talk with him and try to be open minded something else comes down the line, via the denial of this \$15,000 this week; last week's letter that went out through our tax bills; the supposed apology that went through; I just feel that I'm constantly being let down. A lot of people, after what was in the Journal today about the \$15,000 donation, are speculating how that came about and why that came about and that's not my role as a member of the School Committee to speculate. My role is to look at an organization that wants to make a donation to my group and say, "We want to come to the table; we want to step up to the plate and make a donation". If the Mayor had other reasons why he did not want to allow that money to go through feeling contractually there was an issue or some other kind of really solid reason, I wish he would say that instead of making things up. We have right here in front of us the Uniform School District Grant Gift and Donation Acceptance and Expenditure Act for 2009 that was approved by the General Assembly and we on the School Committee also approved our own bill that mirrors this which firmly says that a school can accept money from a governmental organization and it also goes on to talk about the fact that it says nothing about M.O.E., which the Mayor apparently said in the paper today. It just strictly says that any donations that are given by an organization can not be used to reduce M.O.E. in a further year. That's not saying that this group would suddenly expect more money to be given to us the following

year because we got a donation. It just states that the Mayor couldn't reduce what we got by that amount of donation. If the Mayor had reasons why he was voting against this or why he didn't want to allow this to happen, that's fine. I just wish he had stated them instead of making these things up and once again, throwing the School Department and the teachers and the administrators and the students under the bus in keeping us from being able to move forward. I also find it very ironic that the very person who stood before us two years ago when the audit report first came out and told us to cut the "nice-to-haves" and cut the very programs that the firefighters are looking to refund, is also the same person who is now telling us that we can't take a donation to reinstate that program. I think that's very telling as to what the Mayor supports and what his main concern is at this time.

#### **Mr. Traficante**

I want to make it clear that I'm not running for Mayor or City Council; in fact what I am doing is trying to find ..... Beside that, on the docket tonight, is a mention about Veolia Water Company making a donation for the Cranston School Department which we're very grateful for receiving each and every year for the past three years. I just want to make it known that there are many organizations out there and if they would like to make a donation to the Cranston School Department they can do so. The New England Laborers, under the direction of Armand Sabitoni, has given Park View Middle School a donation of \$1,500 for the NEEDS Program. Several children

went to Washington, DC recently and they helped contribute to that particular venture.

**Mrs. Ruggieri**

I worked hard to get this CPS Donations Policy written because we wanted to have something in place to be able to accept the generous donations of any organization that was willing to help us try and fund some of these programs that we've had to cut. It's disconcerting to me that time and time again in the recent months, the information that has been flowing from the Mayor's office has been inaccurate and that causes me the most concern because I feel as though what is being reported is not the full picture. This is a clear instance of that because there is clear language that states that we can accept these as a donation and that there is no other hint that will come down the line that we could certainly not say at a later date that this is a donation and now we need this in our budget every year. It certainly is not what this policy was intended for; this policy was intended to allow us to come up with other ways to creatively fund the programs that we believe are essential to all of our students. In regards to the letter that went out to all taxpayers of Cranston, as Mr. Lombardi stated, there were quite a few inaccuracies in that letter as well. The problem is that we cannot respond in the same manner and this information is out there to the general public without any recourse. In addition to that, when we look at the audit or analysis that was done per the Mayor's instruction, there are a lot of inaccuracies in that



analysis as well and we haven't been able to address it either. What is concerning to me at this stage of the game is that what's being put out to the general public is false information. This is generating the butting of heads that we're never going to recover from.

## **Public Hearing**

**Members of the Public (agenda matters only)**

### **Mr. Tomlins**

I stand here tonight witnessing what I see in this City, a terrible situation. Don't be ashamed of yelling. I did not get that letter. I went to the Council meeting last night and Paul Archetto spoke up also because his name was used in the letter; I believe Mr. Stycos' was too. In other words blame everybody but the person who put the budget together. In November, right after the election, I wrote a memo two weeks after. I predicted what was coming down the pike. If anything, I'm a good judge of character; I always look to the future. The Council right now is dead between the ears. I don't mind saying it publically because I tell them to their face. The three Republicans offered nothing; not one amendment. When I got up and spoke, I said .....I looked at the two men and I said, "You should look in the mirror; you're job is to look at that budget and come up with some amendments. When you took the oath, you didn't take an oath to the Mayor; you an oath to the citizens of Cranston." I know who is also responsible and that is the representative, Nick Mattiello. I met him publically. We are here tonight at the crossroads and you folks have

the most difficult job that I know. I don't know how it's all going to come out but I'll tell you that you're going to get no support from the council; no support from the Mayor's office; so you're on your own. You have to keep talking; you have to keep writing; you have to keep going public. The only thing that's going to change this thing around in this City .....I wrote a letter that will be published tomorrow. Mr. Pelletier wrote a letter trying to explain why he voted for the budget. It was going to be passed anyway. This is what you're up against. Mr. Tomlins also spoke on: The Fire Department making the concession; The Mayoral Academy; the Budget; The Charter.

It was noted, at this time, by Ms. Iannazzi that the Regents vote is scheduled for July 7th at 4:00 at R.I.D.E.

**Joan Prior, 28 Tomahawk Trail**

A resident of the City of Cranston for 45 years. My children attended the school; I have been a secretary in the School Department and still am. I have been on as VP of Local 2044. I'd like to speak on Resolution 11-6-78. Our negotiating team met on June 14th to resolve and get a tentative agreement with the School Committee. On June 15th, the School Committee met in Executive Session at the Briggs Building. On June 20th in the Providence Journal there was an article about the secretaries giving up their raise and having a no layoff. At the meeting when we had negotiations, it was supposed to be confidential information that was between the School Committee and the negotiating team. However, they were going to have a meeting on

**June 23rd to ratify our contract. The secretaries were quite dismayed and upset because this had been in the paper. They wondered what the negotiating team had done. We had a ratification of our tentative agreement on June 23rd and the secretaries, at that point, voted it down. They were really disappointed because they thought they had the trust with both parties. I know that we have worked diligently with the School Committee all the time. It was rather disappointing. I know it's the sign of the times that the money is needed because we are in a budget crisis. The secretaries cast their vote and that's what was decided. I work for the School Department and enjoyed every moment that I have worked here and also being on negotiating teams in the past. Thank you for your time.**

## **Consent Calendar/Consent Agenda**

**The proposed Consent Agenda are Resolutions: #11-6-72, 11-6-73, 11-6-74, 11-6-75, 11-6-76, and 11-6-77. Moved by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mr. Bloom and unanimously carried. (Mr. Bloom absent with cause)**

## **RESOLUTIONS**

### **SPONSORED BY CHAIRPERSON IANNAZZI**

**NO. 11-6-72 – WHEREAS, the Veolia Water Company has donated a gift in the amount of \$5,000 to be earmarked for the restoration of previously eliminated Varsity and Junior Varsity Sports, along with materials, supplies, transportation and event staff, and**

**Be it RESOLVED, that the Cranston School Committee accept said donation as earmarked.**

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **PERSONNEL**

**NO. 11-6-73 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, said certified personnel be recalled from layoff, and**

**Be it further RESOLVED, that the Superintendent notify those individuals of the committee's actions.**

**NO. 11-6-74 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the appointment of the following Program Supervisor be approved:**

**Jeffrey Goldthwait, Math**

**NO. 11-6-75 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the appointment of the following Program Supervisor be approved:**

**John Thompson, Social Studies**

**NO. 11-6-76 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, said certified administrator be renewed as follows:**

**Steven Knowlton, Principal  
Cranston High School West  
Contract Effective Date...July 1, 2011  
See Attached Financial Impact Analysis**

**NO. 11-6-77 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, said non-certified administrator be renewed as follows:**

**Raymond Votto  
Chief Operating Officer  
Contract Effective Date...July 1, 2011  
See Attached Financial Impact Analysis**

**Mr. Nero**

**It's not very often that we get an opportunity to take the motions to praise so I would like to start: We had a number of Program Supervisors retire; therefore, they have big shoes to fill. We had tremendous pools in the positions that we are appointing tonight. I'm thrilled that you were able to approve my recommendation for City-Wide Program Supervisor in Mathematics, Jeffrey Goldthwait, who has been a Department Chair at Cranston East. He's proven himself in the last couple of years with the outstanding job that he does. Jeff's here with his wife and family.**

**The same thing goes for Social Studies. We had another strong pool of candidates so it was very difficult. We came to what was going to be overall the best for our district and I'm pleased to report that they have accepted my recommendation to appoint John Thompson. John is here.**

**Also, tonight, I'd like to point out and am thrilled that for the next three years we will be having working at Cranston West, Steve Knowlton. Steve, you've been doing an outstanding job. When you came to this district you were spear heading the initiative for the increase of 19 ½ Carnegie Units which is now presently 24 and you have an excellent administrative team there. 96% of the kids in the graduating class are going to college. Cranston West used to have some issues in terms of behavior of students and you've done such a great job and graduation was a real indication of just how far Cranston West has gone. Great to have you here for the next three years.**

**It's also great to have all the members of the Executive Team on board also.**

**Ms. Iannazzi**

**The following Resolution 11-6-78 has been withdrawn at this time.**

**NO. 11-6-78 – Now be it RESOLVED that the Memorandum of Agreement of the existing Collective Bargaining Agreement and a one year contract extension between the Cranston School Committee and**

**Rhode Island Council 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, Local 2044 be accepted subject to ratification by the City Council. (Fiscal Analysis Attached)**

**Moved by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mr. Traficante for discussion:**

**Mr. Lombardi:**

**I'd like to hear from Superintendent Nero on his input regarding the Medicaid Billing groups and what his recommendation would be.**

**Superintendent Nero**

**We've been looking over the last couple of years to out-source things and what is the best fit for the district. You always try to look for the best balance that you think would work and we're always trying to look at what involvement with employees being left behind or working within the district but for another company. When we did food service and as we would be looking as we move forward with other units, Sedexo made a wonderful presentation and they were the lowest qualified bidder but there were other things that went along with this and I think the confirmation of the recent contract for next year really proved that they had the best interest. In this case, it's a bit different. I'm going to be recommending to you tonight, the lowest qualified bidder, which is Public Consulting Group, which is PCG. I will tell you that they are fairly large nationally and in 900 school districts nationally and I do believe at this time that this company would be in the best interest for our district. So, I'm recommending PCG.**

**The roll was called:**

**Mrs. Ruggieri Yes Mr. Lombardi Yes**

**Mrs. Culhane Yes Mrs. McFarland Yes**

**Mr. Traficante Yes Ms. Iannazzi Yes**

**(Mr. Bloom was absent with cause.)**

**The Resolution passes 6 – 0.**

## **PURCHASES AND PURCHASED SERVICES**

**RESOLVED, that the following purchases be approved:**

**NO. 11-6-79 – That the contract for Medicaid Billing Services be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder as set forth in the bid specifications.**

**Number of bids issued 4**

**Number of bids received 3**

## **TABLED RESOLUTIONS**

**Moved by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mr. Traficante to remove Resolution No. 11-6-31 from the table, and unanimously carried to remove.**

**NO. 11-6-31 - RESOLVED, that the 2011-2012 Operating Budget, as adopted by the School Committee, be revised.**

**Ms. Iannazzi asked if there were any amendments to the above Operating Budget.**



**Mr. Lombardi asked Mr. Balducci for the number that we are currently at. Mr. Lombardi noted that we've already moved the \$431,000 and we've already moved the union concessions. He noted that this left approximately \$1 million remaining to do.**

**Mr. Lombardi: In light of the above information, I'd like to make a motion to present a line item that I would like to refer to as Debt Restructuring which is in essence relocating at the debt with the amount of \$999,147.00.**

**Mr. Lombardi's motion was seconded by Mr. Traficante. The roll was called on the amendment:**

**Mrs. McFarland Yes Mrs. Ruggieri Yes**

**Mr. Traficante Yes Mrs. Culhane Yes**

**Mr. Lombardi Yes Ms. Iannazzi Yes**

**(Mr. Bloom was absent with cause.)**

**There being no further amendments and no further discussion, the roll was called on the Resolution.**

**Mrs. Culhane Yes Mr. Lombardi Yes**

**Mrs. McFarland Yes Mrs. Ruggieri Yes**

**Mr. Traficante Yes Ms. Iannazzi Yes**

**(Mr. Bloom was absent with cause.)**

**The revision of the 2011-12 Operating Budget was adopted as voted above.**

**A motion was made to remove Resolution 11-6-71 from the table by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mr. Traficante and unanimously carried to remove the following resolution:**

**NO. 11-6-71 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Retainer Agreement between the Becket Fund and the Cranston School Committee be accepted.**

**There being no discussion on Resolution No. 11-6-71, the roll was called:**

**Mrs. Culhane Yes Mr. Traficante Yes**

**Mrs. Ruggieri Yes Mr. Lombardi Yes**

**Mrs. McFarland Yes Ms. Iannazzi Yes**

**(Mr. Bloom was absent with cause.)**

**No New Business**

**Announcement of Future Meetings – July 13, 2011 at 4:30 at Hope Highlands and  
July 18, 2011 at Hope Highlands.**

**Adjournment**

**There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Frank S. Lombardi**  
**School Committee Clerk**

**CRANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**  
**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**  
**SECRETARIES**  
**2011 – 2013**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>
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<b>SALARY INCREASE (A)</b>	<b>(86,747)</b>	<b>(86,747)</b>
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<b>FICA/MEDICARE TAXES</b>	<b>(6,636)</b>	<b>(6,636)</b>
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<b>NON CERTIFIED PENSION (B)</b>	<b>(5,118)</b>	<b>(13,498)</b>
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<b>NET COST (SAVINGS)</b>	<b>(98,501)</b>	<b>(106,881)</b>
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<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>(205,382)</b>	
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**ASSUMPTIONS**

**(A) SALARY**

**2011-2012 - 0%**

**2012-2013 - 0%**

**(B) NON CERTIFIED PENSION**

**2011-2012 - 5.90%**

**2012-2013 - 15.56%**

**Administrator's Compensation Schedule**

**Fiscal Year 2011-2012**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>ANN</b>	<b>SALARY</b>
<b>HEALTH DENTAL LIFE PENSION SURV</b>				
<b>BEN OASDI MEDICARE TOTAL Fringe Sal &amp; Fringe</b>				

<b>Votto, Raymond</b>	<b>COO Briggs</b>	<b>102,473.00</b>	<b>0 0 33</b>	<b>6,046 0 6353 1486</b>
		<b>13,918</b>		<b>116,391</b>

<b>Knowlton, Steven</b>	<b>Principal West</b>	<b>112,231.00</b>	<b>13893 976 33</b>	<b>15,712</b>
		<b>96 0 1627</b>	<b>32,338</b>	<b>144,569</b>

**Administrator's Compensation Schedule**

**Fiscal Year 2012-2013**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>ANN</b>	<b>SALARY</b>
<b>HEALTH DENTAL LIFE PENSION SURV</b>				
<b>BEN OASDI MEDICARE TOTAL Fringe Sal &amp; Fringe</b>				

<b>Votto, Raymond</b>	<b>COO Briggs</b>	<b>102,473.00</b>	<b>0 0 33</b>	<b>7,993 0 6353 1486</b>
		<b>15,865</b>	<b>118,338</b>	
<b>Knowlton, Steven</b>	<b>Principal West</b>	<b>112,231.00</b>	<b>15282 1052 33</b>	<b>17,070</b>
		<b>96 0 1627</b>	<b>35,161</b>	<b>147,392</b>

**Administrator's Compensation Schedule**

**Fiscal Year 2013-2014**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>ANN</b>	<b>SALARY</b>
<b>HEALTH DENTAL LIFE PENSION SURV</b>				
<b>BEN OASDI MEDICARE TOTAL Fringe Sal &amp; Fringe</b>				

<b>Votto, Raymond</b>	<b>COO Briggs</b>	<b>102,473.00</b>	<b>0 0 33</b>	<b>9,940 0 6353 1486</b>
		<b>17,812</b>	<b>120,285</b>	
<b>Knowlton, Steven</b>	<b>Principal West</b>	<b>112,231.00</b>	<b>16810 1105 33</b>	<b>19,293</b>
		<b>96 0 1627</b>	<b>38,964</b>	<b>151,195</b>